

The Traffic Safety Surveys for Cities and Counties in Indiana

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The Indiana Traffic Survey Team is a cooperative effort in which four state departments serve in an advisory capacity to a city. This service has been available only upon request by the mayor. The four departments are the Indiana Highway Department, State Department of Public Instruction, Indiana State Police and the Indiana Office of Traffic Safety. Hallie Myers, of the Indiana Traffic Safety Foundation, a commanding officer of the State Police, and the Director of Traffic Safety have served as consultants in formalizing final recommendations.

To date, (March 31, 1959), the following surveys have been conducted:

1957	1958	1959
Muncie	Bloomington	*Terre Haute
Marion	Martinsville	*Vigo County
Vincennes	New Castle	*Attica
Union City	Hagerstown	
Columbia City	Columbus	
Wabash	Speedway	
Knox	Frankfort	
Kokomo	Elwood	
Vevay	Rockport	
Charlestown	Goshen	
Bluffton	Spencer	*Surveys completed
	Mooresville	but recommendations
	Greensburg	not presented as of
	Dunkirk	this date.

At the very beginning, we established some basic policies concerning the operation of the team:

1. The survey would place major emphasis on things which could be done quickly and without heavy expenditures of money, to promote more efficient use of existing manpower and facilities. For example:

- a. Use of traffic planning and traffic control devices instead of the construction of costly new facilities.
- b. Most efficient use of existing traffic personnel on projects of most importance to traffic movement and safety.
2. The team would operate on a strictly non-political basis.
3. We would avoid criticism for criticism's sake alone.
4. We would deal honestly with the local situation; findings would not be kept secret.
5. Once completed, the report and recommendations would first be presented to the mayor and then to interested citizen groups and public media.

We required of the cities only that they would:

1. Provide access to all required information and records.
2. Give careful consideration to the recommendations and make an honest effort to carry them out as quickly as possible.

The city surveys have been stripped to areas of bare essentials, yet complete enough to help develop a well-rounded traffic program. We have stressed in our preliminary negotiations for the surveys the fact that many activities are necessary to produce an effective traffic program. We have pointed out to city administrators that when these various activities are carried out properly, the program always produces good results but that we seldom find any unit of government doing all that they know how to do.

The surveys have first attempted to determine which of these essentials were being done, which were not being done well, and which were not being done at all.

Briefly, I would like to sketch the areas in which the Traffic Survey Team concentrated its efforts along with some of the points highlighted in each category. Under each category, many other questions were answered, but here are a few:

A. *The City*

Location, population, growth, transportation routes, industry, other factors influencing traffic.

Form of government, organization and stability of enforcement agency.

B. *Ordinances*

Traffic—conformity with state law and Model Traffic Ordinance, whether it had recently been reviewed and printed for distribution.

C. *Courts and Violations Bureau*

Type of courts have local jurisdiction. Do they separate traffic cases? Are the courts well maintained? Are penalties consistent and severe enough to act as a deterrent to repeated violations?

Are violations bureaus under direction of the court?

Is a traffic school used for educational purposes? First offenders? Youthful violators?

D. *Safety Organization*

Mayor traffic commission.

Citizen support group.

E. *Public Safety Education*

Participation in a year-round effort in the schools—public media.

F. *Accident Experience and Accident Records*

How well? How long maintained? Quality of investigation and use of records.

G. *Traffic Engineering*

Is responsibility delegated by ordinance?

Personnel and equipment.

(Most comprehensive portion of the survey.)

Recommendations for use of uniform signs, traffic control devices and maximum use of available street space.

H. *Police Organization and Assignment*

Is organization effective? How are assignments made and for how long?

I. *Police Administration*

Are lines of authority clearly drawn?

Is officer in charge of traffic of a rank equal to other divisions?

Traffic enforcement activities.

Participation in annual inventory.

J. *Police Personnel and Training*

System of selection.

Recruitment and in-service training.

K. *Police Equipment*

Vehicular—office—radio.

L. *Accident Investigation*

Policy of department.

Training.

Arrests and convictions.

M. *Police Enforcement*

Quantity.

Quality.

N. *Police Intersection and Parking Control*

O. *Police Pedestrian Control*

Past experience.

Arrests—Education.

P. *Bicycle Control*

Ordinance.

Accident records—investigation.

Q. *School Safety Education*

Supervision of Safety Education activities.

Pedestrian Safety.

Driver Education.

Safe environment.

Our experience in the 25 cities in which surveys have been completed and recommendations presented has been a completely satisfactory one so far as we are concerned at the state level. The information developed has been tremendous interest to us and the opportunity to render service direct to interested communities has been a source of satisfaction to each of us. It has been a means of bringing state and local government more closely together. In several instances, misunderstandings concerning responsibilities and authority have been resolved. Overall, the city authorities have been most appreciative and have undertaken to put into effect some of the recommendations presented. A recent check, in the area of Police Administration and Enforcement, revealed that as high as 80 per cent of the recommendations have been adopted in several cities. In Traffic Engineering, the follow-up has varied widely in the few cities revisited. We hope to conduct a spot check of all cities surveyed when time permits.

The single endeavor in the area of a county-wide Traffic Safety Survey has been a time-consuming effort, and we are presently deliberating our ability to accept more than one or two a year. We are exploring the possibility of a modified county traffic survey which will stress only three or four of the areas covered in the city survey.

Regardless of the future of the county survey service, I for one am quite hopeful that the cooperative team can remain active in assisting Hoosier cities and towns in developing a more effective traffic program.